2001 Academic Performance Index (API)

Questions and Answers About the 2001 API Base

The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA), signed into law in 1999 and amended by Senate Bill 1552 in 2000, authorized the creation of an educational accountability system for California public schools. The primary goal of the legislation is to help schools improve the academic achievement of all students.

The PSAA has three components:

- **Academic Performance Index (API)** – measures school performance, sets academic growth targets, and monitors growth over time
- **Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP)** – offers financial support to schools in need of improvement
- **Governor's Performance Award (GPA) program** – rewards schools that show improvement based on the API

An additional award program, based on the API, has been enacted as a result of subsequent legislation:

- **Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act (AB 1114)** – offers rewards to certificated staff in lower-performing schools that show significant improvement beyond the API growth target

The PSAA also requires the development and implementation of an Alternative Accountability System for small schools and schools that serve a non-traditional student population.

Answers to frequently-asked questions about the 2001 API Base follow.

What is the Academic Performance Index (API)?

The Academic Performance Index (API) is the cornerstone of California's accountability system. The purpose of the API is to measure the academic performance and growth of schools. It is a numeric index (or scale) that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. A school's score or placement on the API is an indicator of a school's performance level. The interim statewide API performance target for all schools is 800. A school's growth is measured by how it has moved toward (or past) that goal.

What indicators are included in the 2001 API Base?

As adopted by the State Board of Education in September 2001, the 2001 API Base includes the results of the Stanford 9 achievement test and the California Standards Test in English-Language Arts (CST ELA) given in spring 2001 as part of the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. The 2002 API Growth will be calculated in the same way using the same indicators as the 2001 API Base. It is expected that the California Standards Test in Mathematics and the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) will be added as indicators in the 2002 API Base.

What does the 2001 API Base Report specifically include for each school?

The 2001 API Base Report for each school includes:

- percentage of students tested in the 2001 administration of the STAR
- number of students included in the 2001 API (Base)
- school's 2001 API Base (scale 200 to 1000)
- 2001 statewide API rank
- 2001 similar schools API rank
- 2001–2002 growth target
- 2002 API target (2001 API Base plus growth target)
- school demographic characteristics
- subgroup information

Small schools having between 11 and 99 valid STAR test scores receive an API and statewide rank with an asterisk (*) to designate the greater statistical uncertainty of an API based upon fewer than 100 valid scores. Small schools do not receive similar schools ranks.

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When will the 2001 API Base Reports be available?

Public reporting of the 2001 API Base results is scheduled to be posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) website at http://api.cde.ca.gov on January 16, 2002.

In the 2001 API Base Report, how was "STAR 2001 Percent Tested" determined?

This percent is calculated as follows:

Percent Tested = (Total Students Tested)
divided by
(Total Enrollment on First Day of Testing, grades 2–11
less
Students with Parent/Guardian Written Waiver Request
less
Students with Individualized Education Program Exemptions)

The percent tested is used as the participation rate for awards eligibility. It is rounded down to the nearest whole percent.

A student who did **not** attempt the test at all is **not** counted as tested in the participation rate. A student who did attempt items on the test, whether or not there were enough items attempted to receive a score, is still counted as tested in the participation rate. Also, a student who takes the test with one or more nonstandard accommodations is counted as tested in the participation rate.

In the 2001 API Base Report, is the "Number of Students Included in the 2001 API" the same as the "number of valid STAR test scores"?

Yes, the "Number of Students Included in the 2001 API" is the same as the "number of valid STAR test scores." This number is used to determine whether a school is small (i.e., 11 to 99 valid test scores) or very small (i.e., less than 11 valid test scores). It is also used to determine whether a racial/ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup is numerically significant.

Will our school's 2001 API Base score be the same as its 2001 API Growth score?

A school's 2001 API Base will not necessarily be the same as its 2001 API Growth. It is probable that the vast majority of schools will experience at least a minor fluctuation in their API scores, and for some schools this fluctuation may be major. The fluctuation for an individual school will be a function of the school's relative performance on the Stanford 9 English-language arts indicators compared to its performance on the CST ELA and the Scale Calibration Factor (SCF) for its school type.

Are all CST ELA scores included in the 2001 API Base?

Only the CST ELA scores of students who were not enrolled in the district in the previous school year or who do not attempt any items on the CST ELA will be excluded from the 2001 API Base. All other CST ELA scores will be included. The CST ELA is a standards-based test that holds all students to specific performance levels (advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic). The demonstration of these levels is independent of any special accommodation used. Therefore, CST ELA test results from students, regardless of any accommodation that excludes their norm-referenced results, are included in the 2001 API Base. CST ELA results from any student who takes the CST ELA "out-of-level," however, will be counted as far below basic.

Are the grade 4 and 7 STAR writing scores included in the 2001 API Base?

No. The grade 4 and 7 STAR writing scores are not included in the 2001 API Base because the writing scores were not incorporated into the California Standards Test English-Language Arts Standards Test scores for the 2001 STAR. It is anticipated that the writing scores will be incorporated in the 2002 API.

2001 Academic Performance Index (API)

Questions and Answers About the 2001 API Base

How was it determined that the CST ELA would comprise 36 percent of the weight of the API for grades 2-8 and 24 percent of the weight for grades 9-11?

Based on the recommendations of the PSAA Advisory Committee, the State Board of Education in September 2001 adopted the methodology for integrating the CST ELA into the 2001 API Base. One step of the methodology involves the weights used for each component of the API. The State Board adopted weights (1) for each content area and (2) for the Stanford 9 norm-referenced test (NRT) and the California Standards Test (CST).

First, the State Board decided that the existing weight assigned to each content area should be maintained. This means that, for grades 2–8, the English-language arts component of the API (i.e., reading, language, and spelling from the Stanford 9 and the CST ELA) should remain at 60 percent and mathematics at 40 percent of the API. For grades 9–11, the English-language arts component (i.e., reading and language from the Stanford 9 and the CST ELA) should remain at 40 percent and mathematics, science, and social science at 60 percent of the API. Second, the State Board decided that, within the English-language arts content area, the CST results should be weighted 60 percent, and the NRT results should be weighted 40 percent.

Thus, for grades 2–8, 60 percent (weight of total ELA component for the API) of 60 percent (weight of CST ELA results) equals a weight of 36 percent. For grades 9-11, 40 percent (weight of total ELA component for the API) of 60 percent (weight of CST ELA results) equals a weight of 24 percent.

Grades 2–8	60% x 60% = 36% of the API
Grades 9–11	40% x 60% = 24% of the API

These ratios are to be applied fully in the 2001 API Base, rather than being phased-in over several years.

More detailed information about the weights can be found in the document entitled "The 2001 Base Academic Performance Index (API): Integrating the California Standards Test for English-Language Arts into the API" at http://www.cde.ca.gov/api on the CDE website.

What is the SCF?

The Scale Calibration Factor (SCF) provides a positive or negative adjustment to a school's base year API score each year in order to maintain consistency in the statewide API scale from one API reporting cycle to the next. Simply put, the calculation of the SCF for the 2001–2002 API reporting cycle is the difference between the statewide average 2001 API Growth and the statewide average 2001 API Base. SCFs are calculated separately for elementary schools (grades 2–6), middle schools (grades 7–8), and high schools (grades 9–11).

Can the SCF be either a positive or negative change to a school's API?

Yes. The SCF can be either positive or negative.

Is the SCF for all elementary schools (grades 2–6) the same?

Yes. The SCF for all schools with grades 2–6 is the same. Similarly, the SCF for all schools with grades 7–8 is the same, and the SCF for all schools with grades 9–11 is the same. SCFs are calculated separately for each of the three school types:

- elementary (grades 2–6)
- middle (grades 7–8)
- high (grades 9–11)

How is the SCF calculated for a school with a grade span of K–8?

For a school with a grade configuration that includes both grades 6 and 7 or 8 and 9, the SCF is applied to

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each grade configuration segment API (i.e., grades 2–6 API and grades 7–8 API). The school's API then is calculated as the average of the two grade configuration segment APIs weighted by the number of valid test scores.

Why is the SCF needed?

When new indicators are added to the API, the statewide average API will fluctuate between API reporting cycles (i.e., the **statewide average** Growth and Base APIs may be different). This is due to the fact that existing weights are revised as new indicators are added and that schools' performance on a new indicator may vary from performance on existing indicators. The fluctuation in the statewide average API may appear inconsistent when considering that both the 2001 Stanford 9 and 2001 CST ELA are taken by exactly the same students at exactly the same time. In order to avoid this inconsistency, the State Board adopted the use of a Scale Calibration Factor (SCF) to adjust each school's API so that the statewide average API scale remains the same between API reporting cycles.

What is the SCF for subgroups?

The SCF for each numerically significant subgroup API at a school is the same as the schoolwide SCF.

Will the SCF be the same for the 2002 API?

The SCF for the 2002 API Growth will be the same as the 2001 API Base SCF because these two APIs are within the same API reporting cycle (the 2001–2002 cycle). Therefore, the SCF will have no effect on the computation of growth. The SCF for the 2002 API Base is likely to be different because of the addition of new API components (indicators).